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Dr. Balathzar brings his Marvelous Miracle Medicine Show to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

Baker City, Oregon - - - Snake Oil salesman “Dr. Balthazar” will be stopping by the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center August 15-18th to convince visitors to purchase a bottle of his cure all miracle elixir. Presentations are scheduled daily at 10:00, 12:00 and 2:00 in the Leo Adler Theater located inside the Center.

Mike Follin, an education interpreter with Ohio Historical Society in Cincinnati, created the character of a 19th century frontier patent medicine salesman to help modern Americans understand this unusual aspect of frontier history and an earlier era in health care. In a time before internet, television, and radio, patent medicine salesmen traveled to small towns and settlements and provided an entertaining show, shared gossip and national news, introduced new popular cultural trends to remote areas, and dispensed medical advice. Patent medicine companies developed cure all elixirs that offered hope to frontier settlers who had no access to professional medical care and no health insurance.

Follin interprets several frontier characters in his work. The Dr. Balathazar character recreates the rapid fire patter and entertaining techniques that attracted early American country folk to attend a sales talk and purchase what usually turned out to be useless tonics. The patent medicine salesman would leave town before customers could demand a refund. Follin opens and closes his forty minute programs with modern viewpoints and facts about this early industry and frontier life, but when he assumes his frontier character, audiences find themselves transported back in time, and often become part of the good doctor’s sales spiel.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, operated by the Bureau of Land Management, is located 5 miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Center is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission for adults is \$8. Seniors are \$4.50. Children 15 and under are free. Federal passes are accepted. Visit www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail/ for more information about the Center, or call 541-523-1843 for updates on programs and events.

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